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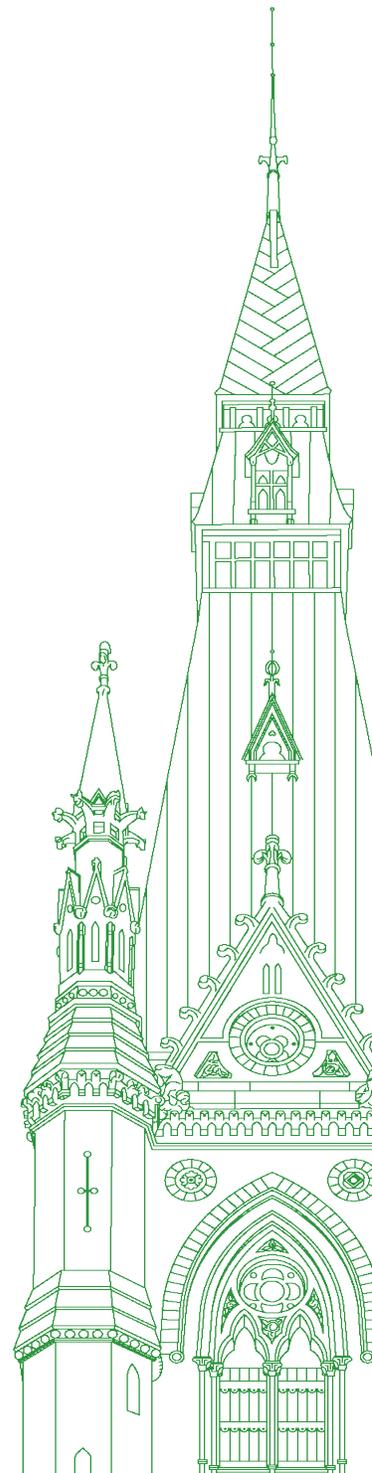
Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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Thursday, September 18, 2025



Chair: Robert Morrissey

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Thursday, September 18, 2025

• (1620)

[English]

The Chair (Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): Committee members, the committee resumes its meeting in public.

To begin, I will read into the record the motion that's currently on the floor, as it has been amended.

The motion reads:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the decision made by the committee on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, the Minister of Jobs and Families, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, the Secretary of State for Seniors, the Secretary of State for Labour, and the Secretary of State for Children and Youth be invited to appear separately before the committee, each accompanied by their officials, for a minimum of one hour, to discuss their respective mandates and key priorities in their service to Canadians and that the committee direct the clerk to schedule these appearances before October 10, 2025, and if this is not possible, then at the earliest possible appearance.

That, the committee then undertake the following three studies on an urgent basis to ensure that the government has parliamentary advice on how to deal with employment and labour issues in Canada:

1. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development, and the Status of Persons with Disabilities undertake and prioritize an urgent study on employment in Canada, especially since youth employment has reached its lowest level in 25 years and young people continue to face barriers in accessing employment insurance, which increases their vulnerability. That the committee recommends solutions, provided that:

- no fewer than seven meetings be dedicated to this study;
- the Minister of Jobs and Families and the Secretary of State (Children and Youth) be invited to appear separately for two hours each, alongside their officials;
- students, recent graduates, employers, labour market experts, and other witnesses at each party's discretion be invited to provide witness testimony;
- the committee report their findings and recommendations to the House with a request for a government response pursuant to Standing Order 109; and
- in the interim, the committee immediately report to the House that it is alarmed over the 25-year low youth employment data.

2. That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the impact of the lack of a definition of the term "work" in Part III of the Canada Labour Code and into the government's routine use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to refer labour disputes to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) for binding arbitration, including their latest intervention ordering Air Canada and their flight attendants into binding arbitration despite the company's refusal to pay these attendants for their pre- and post-flight work, with a view to assessing the impacts these referrals have on the rights of workers in federally regulated industries, provided that:

- the committee dedicate at least four meetings for this study,
- the following witnesses be invited to appear on separate panels, for no less than one hour each:
 - the Minister of Jobs and Families;
 - the Secretary of State (Labour);

3. the Chair of the CIRB;

c. the committee invite the labour groups involved in each instance that the government invoked section 107 of the Canada Labour Code since the beginning of 2024 to provide their testimony;

d. the committee receive additional evidence from labour experts, economists, and other witnesses provided to the clerk by members of the committee;

e. the committee report their findings and recommendations to the House with a request for a government response pursuant to Standing Order 109; and

f. in the interim, the committee report to the House that it calls on the Minister of Jobs and Families to amend the Canada Labour Code to require federally regulated airlines to pay flight attendants for all hours they are on duty, not just the time they spend in the air.

3. That, notwithstanding the decision made by the committee on September 16, 2025, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee report its findings to the House on the study on workers in the seasonal industry and the employment insurance program that was undertaken during the 1st Session of the 44th Parliament and that the evidence and documents gathered by the committee be taken into consideration during the current session; that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

Currently being debated on the floor is an amendment to remove section 2 of this motion. Is there any discussion?

I have Madame Koutrakis, Madame Goodridge, Mr. Genuis and then Ms. Gill.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): I'm sorry, Chair. I have a point of order to clarify the rules.

We have a motion on the floor and an amendment on the floor that proposes to strike a study on the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, but we are not able to say in public who moved the amendment to strike that study unless someone is willing to own up to it.

Is that correct?

• (1625)

The Chair: Mr. Genuis, that's correct. You understand the rules of the committee. We are now in public, and currently there is an amendment on the floor.

I have Madame Koutrakis, Madame Goodridge and Madame Gill, and then it's back to Mr. Genuis. We're on the amendment to remove section 2.

Ms. Koutrakis, you have the floor.

Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to my colleagues for being around this table and doing the very difficult work that we are all tasked with doing for all Canadians.

I was the one who proposed in camera—I'm not afraid to own up to that, Mr. Genuis—to strike item 2 from this proposal. The reason for doing so is that, currently.... I think all Canadians know—the minister has been very clear—that the minister has ordered a probe, and the results of that probe are expected on October 17.

Many of the witnesses who would be called before this committee if we were to go into this study right now would not be able to provide us with fulsome and wholesome testimony, because a lot of that information might be redacted due to the litigation that is before us. Therefore, the reasoning for the request to strike it at this time is that we want to make sure that when—or if—this item ever comes back to the committee, we'll know with certainty what facts that probe gave us.

Right now, we don't have any of that, if we go forward, as in the entire motion proposed by our colleague Mrs. Falk, before October 10. The probe will end and the findings will be finished by October 17. I can't see how we can go forward with this study at this time when we know there is a probe happening at the same time.

Do we want to have a study that is going to produce something important that will benefit all Canadians, or do we want to have a study just because we are trying to embarrass the government since this is a hot issue right now and everybody is talking about it? I would like to think that's not the case.

I'd like to make sure that everyone around this table is working in good faith for all Canadians. Let's find a way to reach a compromise and allow this probe to happen in the way it's supposed to. We're here to work together. I hope that I can count on the support of our colleagues across the way.

The Chair: I have Mrs. Goodridge on the amendment.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Thank you Mr. Chair.

Perhaps we could ask the clerk if he can remind committee members about parliamentary privilege when it comes to witness testimony at committee and whether it can or cannot be used in court. My understanding of parliamentary privilege is that nothing a witness says could actually be used, because of parliamentary privilege. For that matter, I believe this is just something the Liberals are afraid to talk about.

Canadians were stuck all across Canada and the world this summer because of the Liberals' inaction on this very important issue. This is something that I believe we need to get to the bottom of, and Canadians expect us to act. They still haven't found any kind of resolution to this issue. One of the big challenges with this is that it means we still don't have an answer, so there are people who are afraid to fly right now because they're afraid they're going to get stuck, as some of their friends, families and co-workers did.

It is incumbent upon us, as parliamentarians, to get to the bottom of this, so I was wondering, now that the clerk has been able to find the green book, if he has the ability to give us that answer.

The Chair: I will come back to that when the clerk advises.

In the meantime, I will go to Madame Gill on the amendment.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Personally, I would like this part of the motion to remain as is, because I would like us to take a broader look at what is happening here. Air Canada is certainly one example currently in the news, but other airlines will be renegotiating their collective agreements in the coming months, probably over the holidays or this winter.

In my opinion, this is not just about Air Canada; it is clearly about the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. This section has been used more frequently in recent years. We have to pay attention not only to cases where the section has been used, but also to the frequency with which it has been used. Beyond that, we are also talking about the definition of work, but there is no such definition in the Canada Labour Code. That is something else that should be added. It's not just part III of the code. There's no definition of work, so you end up with work not being paid. I think that's something that needs to be addressed as well.

In addition, the definition of work concerns not only flight attendants, but all Quebeckers and Canadians.

During a strike, people talk a lot about the economy. My party does, for example. We find ourselves in a situation where people are afraid to. I would therefore like the economic portion of the motion to remain. If we don't travel abroad, at least we'll travel in Canada and Quebec.

There are also all the people who have to travel on business. I think the flight attendants' union members are not the only people affected. I think the definition of work is a very broad and important topic. Since this topic is making headlines right now, I think it's a good time to tackle the problem head-on.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Genuis, go ahead on the amendment.

Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Chair.

I'm glad we can have a discussion where we acknowledge what people's positions are.

This is with respect to the amendment we're on, the second study. We're proposing, as Conservatives, that we do proceed with doing a study of the government's use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code.

My colleague opposite suggested that, in her view, it would be important that the study not begin before October 17, due to an internal process the government is undertaking. I don't want to be uncollaborative. I think the majority of the committee wants to see the study take place, as do we. I also don't think it's likely that we would begin that study before October 17 anyway, given that we've now gotten to a point where there's agreement on the need to do a substantial youth unemployment study.

I would propose instead—I don't think it's really necessary, but if it gives members greater ease—that we leave in the study but add a proviso that this study will not begin before October 17, 2025.

I'll look to you, Chair, for advice procedurally here. I wonder if I can subamend the amendment to leave in the study but add that section. You might find that this is too substantial to count as a subamendment, in which case we would have to vote down the amendment, and then I can move that additional proviso as a new amendment.

If the particular desire of the government is to say that because of internal processes they don't want this study to proceed before October 17, we can meet in the middle on that and do the study after October 17. However, if there are other reasons the government doesn't want to do the study at all, then I guess we'll just have to have the votes and let the chips fall where they may.

The Chair: Okay.

Garnett Genuis: I'm sorry, Chair. I was just looking for some advice.

Is that a subamendment I can move, or is that too dramatic a change?

The Chair: It's too dramatic a change.

Garnett Genuis: All right.

I'm just forecasting that there will likely be such an amendment in the future, but for now, we'll oppose this amendment. I think we can work on a compromise after that.

The Chair: Okay.

We're still on the amendment by Ms. Koutrakis.

The floor goes to Madame Desrochers, and then Monsieur Joseph.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to come back to the point raised by my colleague Ms. Koutrakis. Meetings with stakeholders will indeed take place in the coming weeks. I think the government certainly wants to see this dealt with in a way that benefits workers and has made that message very clear.

I agree with Mrs. Gill about the importance of looking at the issue that has been raised. We agree with the need for the study, but we're wondering about two things. First of all, there's the question of timing, given that discussions are ongoing and there won't be a report released until early next year.

What is the best time to do this study?

[*English*]

What is the scope of the study? This is a really important issue, and I think it merits a deep dive. It merits a full, comprehensive study, and not one that is done as a way to, as my colleague said, embarrass the government. I think Canadians deserve better than that, and I think Canadian workers deserve better than that.

I know we're discussing the amendment right now, but I would like to go back to the initial discussion we had at the last committee meeting—I'm not sure if I can refer to it. This is a very large motion that actually includes four things. If it goes forward, it prevents us from prioritizing. It actually prioritizes for the committee the studies that would be going forward and the order in which they would be going forward. In the same way that we want to do one amendment at a time, I would also think that we would want to discuss one of these things at a time so that we're able to look at them each in their own validity.

[*Translation*]

That is my point of view, and I wanted to share it with the committee.

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Chair, my colleague has already talked about the points I wanted to raise.

Furthermore, in subsection 2, I don't know if it's possible to remove the instances of the word “routine”, as in “routine use”. This is a new government. Therefore, the word “routine” seems excessive. We're talking about a period beginning in 2024, while the government wasn't elected until April 28. I don't know if Mr. Genuis can remove the instances of the word “routine” from his proposal, because it seems excessive to me.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Joseph.

Is there further discussion on the amendment?

Ms. Fancy.

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In an effort to work collaboratively.... I think the federal government has been made aware of the deeply concerning allegations of unpaid work, which are central to some of this study. That's why in August of this year—I believe it was the 18th—a probe was launched into unpaid work in the federally regulated airline sector.

Today, we're following up on that work, and we're trying to create some concrete steps to get to the bottom of those allegations, primarily through stakeholder outreach within the probe. The government has reached out to a lot of the different targeted stakeholders, including unions, employees and employers, to participate in these consultations. That's part of the reasoning behind striking this section as an amendment.

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge.

Laila Goodridge: I appreciate that they're going to have these meetings, some behind closed doors, but Canadians deserve to have answers on this. There are countless Canadians who got stranded as a direct result of Liberal inaction. This isn't the first time this has supposedly come to them. Conservatives have been talking about this. We talked about it in the last Parliament. I know the member wasn't here for this, but this isn't something new.

There was a private member's bill talking about how unpaid work won't fly. This is not something that all of a sudden happened and we couldn't have foreseen happening. Conservatives were saying this was a serious problem before prorogation, so we need to study this.

• (1640)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Genuis.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, just to clarify, the motion on the floor right now is to strike the second study and not study at all the issues around section 107. Our position is that we should study section 107, which is why we're going to oppose this amendment, and if members would like to wordsmith, hopefully that wordsmithing is done with the goal of getting to a conclusion and not just using the clock. It's fine to propose word modifications, but this particular amendment, which we oppose, is to strike that study completely.

I'll leave it there.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Ms. Koutrakis.

Annie Koutrakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to clarify that last point.

The point we're trying to make, my dear colleague Mr. Genuis, is that right now is not the time to put a limit or a date on this study. Obviously, Canadians know about this issue. All of us want to make sure that Canadians who work get paid for the work they do. We're just saying that right now is not the time to do that, when we already know that there are going to be stakeholder meetings, that we're going to have the results by October 17, and that the results are going to be made public early in the year.

If we're going to come back to this committee and have a full and proper study, let's do it the right way. Let's not rush through a study right now and say "on or before October 10" to get all of this. Even if it starts on October 17, as you said earlier... Why not wait to make sure that we are going to be dealing with facts and not just hearsay? Of course, all Canadians expect all Canadians to be paid for the work they do. This is an item that has really been top of mind for the minister and the ministry. We want to make sure that we do the right thing by all employers and employees, specifically to make sure they get paid for the work they do.

It is an item that is serious, and it deserves to have the proper study to make sure that we know what we're going to be dealing with on an ongoing basis. If we need to change the legislation and, as the minister has said publicly, if there is currently a loophole in the labour code that needs to be amended, that is something the government is going to be looking at, but first we need to make

sure that we know what we're dealing with and what we hear from the results of the probe.

We're not saying no to this study. We're saying no to this study at this particular moment. Let's make sure we have the facts first, before we go forward and spend time on this important study.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Koutrakis.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joseph, you have the floor.

Natilien Joseph: Mr. Chair, I don't know if Ms. Koutrakis is going to agree with me, but I would like to ask for adjournment, if possible. It's up to you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: No, it's not. Are you making a motion to adjourn debate on the motion?

[*Translation*]

Natilien Joseph: I'm asking my colleagues opposite and everyone else if it's possible to adjourn the debate.

[*English*]

The Chair: It is my interpretation, Mr. Joseph, that you made a motion to adjourn debate on the amendment that's currently on the floor.

[*Translation*]

Natilien Joseph: That's correct, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: With that—

Garnett Genuis: I have a point of order, Chair. I think this is what you're getting at, but just for precision, you don't adjourn debate on an amendment only. If you're adjourning debate, you're adjourning debate on everything that is being discussed. You can vote down the amendment, but if you're adjourning debate, you're adjourning debate.

• (1645)

The Chair: Yes, I thought that was clear. It's adjourning debate on the amendment, and it's adjourning debate on the amendments being discussed on the motion. It would adjourn it all, so we are clear.

We have a motion from Mr. Joseph to adjourn debate on the amendment and the motion currently on the floor. We'll have a recorded vote to adjourn debate on the motion.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Desrochers, the floor is yours.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you.

If I understand correctly, we're still talking about the amendment proposing to remove the second part of the motion. In that case, could we be given a little time to see what we could leave in the text? There are parts of the text that we would be comfortable keeping. Procedurally, I don't know how that would work.

We're really trying to find a compromise here, because these are very important issues for Canadians and Canadian workers. We think it's important to study the issue, to learn from what happened, to learn how the mechanisms in place have been used in recent years. That's absolutely valid. However, we really want to understand what would be involved and whether it makes sense to do so given that the situation is ongoing and affecting current workers. We really want to make sure that this is done constructively and for the right reasons, not to generate videos for social media campaigns.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Gill, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I didn't expect to be responding to something like that. Personally, I couldn't tell flight attendants that I wanted to do a study on section 107 and the definition of work just because I wanted to make videos. That's not my goal.

Even if a subject is not in the news or another body is looking into the matter, nothing prevents our committee from doing a study on it.

I just cannot say that the subject isn't important enough, that we should just do the study later on or that we don't have enough information. In addition, we are in a parliamentary committee, and I emphasize the word “parliamentary”. A parliamentary committee is not a government committee. We have to be able to discuss things together and publicly hear from witnesses who can give their opinion. I think it would add to the work the government is currently doing on unpaid work. Other aspects are also addressed in the motion. Among other things, I talked about the definition of work, which has an obvious connection to the issue of unpaid work.

In my opinion, it would be really worthwhile for the committee to look into these issues, and I don't want anyone to impute motives. No one from back home or anywhere else likes it when we try to pit one group against another.

I see what's happening right now. I met with flight attendants as well as the union, and they told me that time was of the essence. The issue concerns other people as well, including other flight attendants, but not just them. It's a very broad issue, as my colleague across the way rightly said. However, I don't see that as a reason not to tackle it. Instead, I think this is a pivotal moment, because some labour-related issues have never been raised. It's the job of this committee to raise them. Flight attendants and all workers are asking us to do so.

I think it would be beneficial to all of us if we gave ourselves a chance and no one said that we just want to make videos. I hope that the committee will be able to work in a very serious and sincere manner, for everyone's benefit.

• (1650)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Madame Desrochers, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Caroline Desrochers: I thank my colleague for her comments.

I think we're saying the same thing, that it would be important to study this issue. I'm not suggesting that we look at the motion for a very prolonged period of time, but I would suggest that we have time to look at the text. At first, the motion had words like “the Liberal government” and “routine use”. They were removed, but it was very partisan language. I think workers—

Marilène Gill: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Can we refer to what was said in camera?

Caroline Desrochers: I withdraw my comment, Mr. Chair.

All I'm saying is that if we had time to read the motion, we could try to find a compromise.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Koutrakis.

Annie Koutrakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to say, for all Canadians watching us—and I'm sure they're watching with great interest—that the Canada Labour Code is clear: No worker should earn less than the minimum wage for every hour worked. I said that earlier as well—not on the ground, not in the air, not anywhere.

Flight attendants are essential to the safety of all travellers in the air, and everybody knows it. Day in and day out, they do the hard work and keep us safe. They are the first responders in the sky. We all take airplanes when we're travelling long distances, and we know how hard they work. Let me be clear: They deserve fair compensation for the critical work they do. No person in Canada should ever not get paid for the work they do. I think we all agree on that.

All we're saying on this side of the committee, the Liberal side, is that we need to make sure that, when we study this, we are dealing with facts. We need to hear what the results are from the probe. I don't believe we are asking for an indefinite extension. We're just saying, let's wait to hear what the results from the probe are, so that we can deal with facts, hear the stakeholders and have a fulsome study that is actually going to lead to the changes that perhaps need to be made.

Let's make sure we allow for the appropriate time before we start a study that obviously we all agree needs to happen. What we're not agreeing on is the timing of the study.

The Chair: Madame Gill is the next speaker.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to correct something my colleague Ms. Koutrakis said. She says that the Canada Labour Code is clear. Personally, I already see a problem, because the Canada Labour Code is not clear. It says that all work must be remunerated, but there is no definition of the word "work". That poses a problem. How can we know that all work is paid when there is no definition of a salary?

Also, how can you say that it's specified in the code, when no rate is indicated? For example, an employer could pay some hours at half the rate or they could pay someone below minimum wage. In my opinion, this is already a problem and not something that can be put off for very long.

I would add one last thing. I talked about salary, the fact that some workers could be paid below minimum wage, but they could also have fewer hours of work. That is already a problem. I would say that it is somewhat false, even wrong, to say that everything is already clear and settled. That's not the case. That is why we are moving this motion.

• (1655)

[English]

The Chair: I have Mr. Joseph on the amendment.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph: Mr. Chair, these people are the first responders in the sky. Make no mistake: They keep us safe every time we fly. We have nothing against them. However, my colleagues opposite should put themselves in the shoes of a mother who is in Paris, Cuba or the Dominican Republic with her three children just before school starts back up.

Can Mrs. Gill explain to Canadians why she voted against the proposal? Is she thinking of those people as well? We have nothing against flight attendants. The government made that decision because families were stuck overseas. There is a contradiction on the part of the people on the other side of the table.

Marilène Gill: I don't know if the question is for me, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on the amendment currently on the floor?

If not, we have two options: We can ask for unanimous consent to withdraw the motion, or we'll go to a vote.

Garnett Genuis: We can defeat it on division, if you'd like.

The Chair: No.

Garnett Genuis: Okay. I request a recorded vote, then.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Desrochers.

Garnett Genuis: I have a point of order, Chair.

You called the vote. Members can't be added to the speaking list after you've called the vote.

The Chair: No, she had her hand up.

Garnett Genuis: Chair, you called the vote.

The Chair: Did I call it?

Rosemarie Falk: Yes, and then Madame Gill asked for a recorded vote.

The Chair: There were two options. We could proceed with unanimous consent, or we could then go to a vote if nobody wanted to speak. That was my understanding.

Garnett Genuis: Chair, you called the vote, and if you're saying now that you didn't call the vote, then I'll respectfully challenge that ruling, because I believe you did call the vote.

The Chair: No, I gave the option. The committee had the option of requesting unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment or, if there were no speakers, we'd go to a vote.

Garnett Genuis: Chair, I understand what you're saying now, but I believe that you did call the vote. If you're saying you didn't call the vote, then I'm challenging that ruling. It's clear we disagree. That's okay. It's something that happens, but I'm challenging your ruling because I believe you did call a vote.

The Chair: I will allow the challenge of the chair to go to a vote. I didn't view that I was that definitive, but it's your challenge, which is fine.

(Ruling of the chair overturned: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: Then we will go to a vote on the amendment that is currently being debated.

• (1700)

Annie Koutrakis: I don't know if I could ask this, but I will anyway. I'd like to know what we're voting on. Could you read it out, please, so that we have a better understanding of what we're voting on?

The Chair: Yes. It's the amendment to remove section 2 in its entirety from the motion currently being debated. So we're clear, we're going to a recorded vote on the amendment that was being discussed, which calls for the removal of section 2 from the motion that was introduced.

(Amendment negated: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: We are back to the motion currently on the floor.

I have Mr. Genuis on the motion, and then Ms. Desrochers.

Annie Koutrakis: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Annie Koutrakis: I'm being advised that the audio is not working online on ParlVU.

The Chair: I will suspend while we clarify that.

• (1700) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1700)

The Chair: The committee is back in session. There still may be an issue with the sound, but I will be advised if there is. There was an issue with it, but it's been corrected now.

Just to be clear, we are back to the main motion, and I had Mr. Genuis wanting the floor.

Mr. Genuis, I'll pass the floor to you.

• (1705)

Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Chair.

I hope that we have the goodwill around this table to get to a solution. We could spend hours or decades going around and around. We want to get to a solution here so that we can begin these important studies—a study on youth unemployment, a study on section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, and what I understand to be a continuation of a study on seasonal industries and employment insurance—and hear from ministers. I hope we can get to a solution.

Some concerns were indicated about some aspects of the section 107 study. I guess I'd like to seek the unanimous consent of the committee—if we have unanimous consent, we can get this done; if not, you know, it'll be more difficult—that we take out the word “routine” in the part about the second study, because I heard that members of the government didn't like that word being in there. Personally, I think it's a good word, but it's not a word to die on.

I'd also add a paragraph (g) with regard to that same study: “that this study will begin no earlier than October 17, 2025”.

If we have unanimous consent to make those changes and to proceed to a vote on the main motion, then we can proceed. If the committee doesn't agree to do that, then I think it suggests that maybe the goal of some members is just to talk this out and not get to a solution.

What I'd like to propose is unanimous consent for that solution—to remove the word “routine” and to add “that this study will begin no earlier than October 17, 2025”—and that we proceed immediately to a vote on the main motion after making those changes.

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Madame Desrochers.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank my colleague for proposing a solution to get us to a place where we can actually start our work. I think what Canadians are expecting of us is to do this kind of work.

I still believe that this motion, as it is, is very large, and I find it difficult to agree with everything. I know I've proposed this before, but I wonder if there would be a way to separate these items so that we can take the time to work through them. We are absolutely willing to look at each of these three items, but they are quite large and encompassing.

On section 2, I agree with removing the word “routine”, which takes us to a better place, but we still have not had a discussion

around the motion. We were proposing to strike it in its entirety in order to protect the discussions that are pending on the issue and the report. So now, if we are going to take a look at keeping the motion, we will need some time to look at the parts of it that would deliver the best results.

I guess what we said before, and I reiterate, is that we believe this is an important study. We believe that this should be done, but we need to do it in the right way and in the right sequence. I know we're not doing amendments here, but in the same spirit as my colleague, who did not put forward an amendment but just mentioned something that they could consider removing, we would definitely want to remove section (f) of this. Again, this is in the spirit of keeping this section as neutral and non-partisan as possible and really focus on the substance of what it is we want to accomplish.

• (1710)

The Chair: Ms. Fancy.

Jessica Fancy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In the spirit of collegiality we're trying to have within this committee, I'm proposing taking out the part about section 107 and then doing a study on the pay for our flight attendants. That's what all three parties here today have been discussing, the pay and condition for the flight attendants. I'm proposing that we take out section 107 and do the study primarily surrounding the pay of flight attendants.

The Chair: I've been advised the sound is not working again, so I have to suspend.

• (1710) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1710)

The Chair: Committee members, we will begin again. We may require further suspension, because they cannot tell if the floor audio is getting through on ParlVU for those participating.

I'll return to Ms. Fancy, who was speaking when we had to suspend.

Jessica Fancy: Thank you, Chair.

I guess what I was talking about was taking out the part about section 107. A lot of our talk today has been about supporting the financial pieces related to the flight attendants. I suggested taking out section 107 of the code because of the legal implications for the witnesses. Due to the probe and what's going on, it would not be good for their witnesses either, and it could also compromise the case within the probe.

• (1715)

The Chair: Is there any more discussion? There's been some back-and-forth on the wording.

Madame Desrochers.

Caroline Desrochers: I'd just like to understand from my colleague if there is an interest in.... I listened to what my colleague Marilène Gill had to say earlier about the definition of labour and the definition of salary and unpaid work. Is there a possibility, in the spirit of coming to a place where we can move forward, of broadening what we are proposing to study in the labour code?

I'd love to hear from my colleague if she has something to suggest in terms of broadening what is proposed in section 2.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mrs. Gill, you have the floor.

Marilène Gill: What I understand from what I'm hearing is that the study is too specific—

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me. We do not have interpretation.

We'll suspend.

• (1715) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1715)

The Chair: The committee will resume.

We were in discussion on the motion.

Madame Gill, you were speaking when we lost translation.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to get clarification.

Earlier, it emerged from a number of discussions that the motion was already very broad and would require a lot of time for study. I'm now being asked if I agree with expanding the study.

I would like to know if that is indeed what is being asked of me. Earlier, I was told that the motion was too broad; now some are asking to expand the study.

Did I understand correctly?

• (1720)

The Chair: Ms. Desrochers, you have the floor.

Caroline Desrochers: I thank the member for her question.

Actually, I was referring to what was said earlier about the importance of providing a better definition and the challenge posed by the current Canada Labour Code.

Right now, the current situation at Air Canada is being used to study the use of section 107 of the code. Do we want to study the use of this section or do we want to study the definitions contained in the code and other problematic elements?

I was wondering if we could talk a bit more about what you think is the most important to study so that we can find some common ground and move forward.

Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, we could certainly add other elements. For example, it is all well and good to define work, but we will also have to add everything relating to compensation. Several other ele-

ments could very likely be added to the definition of work, because the definition of work alone would not be sufficient.

My proposal has been called quite broad. In my opinion, simply addressing the issue of the definition of work is a start. Having discussions is the way we manage to find the blind spots and what should be changed. As we know, in any rigorous intellectual work, we realize that the problem has ramifications and we also end up finding other things.

I don't know if it's relevant to state this here. We're already talking about the use of section 107 and we've removed the reference to routine use. Everyone agreed on that. We are talking about the definition of work, but we also know that witnesses who appear before committees can discuss other topics and share other thoughts that may be along the same lines or inspire others. For example, we're talking about Air Canada, but I imagine we'll also be talking about other carriers.

I don't think the idea is to do a complete study of the Canada Labour Code and overhaul it. We would already be studying the definition of work and the use of section 107, and that would be sufficient, given the number of studies and the time allocated to them.

I'm satisfied with the motion as it stands, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

If there's no discussion, I'll go back to you, Mr. Genuis, just to clarify whether or not it was an amendment that you made.

Garnett Genuis: I didn't make an amendment. I suggested a solution.

The Chair: Yes, I didn't think so.

Is there discussion on the main motion?

Ms. Koutrakis, go ahead.

Annie Koutrakis: I'm just wondering if there's a willingness to talk about the end date of that study. You proposed not starting before October 17. Is there a willingness to go beyond that date? If there is a willingness to go beyond that date, what, in your view, would that look like? I just want to make sure, because some of the dates we will be discussing might make a bit more sense if we have the necessary information by that new date.

I'm just wondering if there's an openness or willingness to look at that.

Garnett Genuis: Yes. You tell me what day you want for that. The language I proposed was that the study "begin no earlier than". I took October 17 directly from you. We want to be reasonable here. I don't want October 17, 2027, or something, but if you want to change it to November 1 or something like that, that's fine. Just tell us what you want, but with the goal of getting this done.

The Chair: Ms. Koutrakis, go ahead.

Annie Koutrakis: Earlier, we talked about the results of that probe, which are not going to be ready before the new year, in January. That's an issue for us. Is that something we could work with? Is that something we could entertain as a compromise? I'm not sure. I'm trying to find something we can all work with here.

• (1725)

The Chair: Is there any discussion?

Madame Desrochers, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Caroline Desrochers: It's very hard for us to support this amendment to the Canada Labour Code in the interim. I think the important thing is to do the study and see what comes out of it. Then we can see what the committee recommends. If the motion were to be adopted, we would absolutely want to remove proposed section f.

I would remind you that the second part of the motion proposes “that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the impact of the lack of a definition of the term ‘work’ in part III of the Canada Labour Code”. The motion also suggests studying the use of section 107, which refers labour disputes to the Canada Industrial Relations Board. The motion specifically looks at Air Canada and its flight attendants and the impact that referring these disputes has had.

Section f states that, while the committee is conducting the study and discussions are under way among stakeholders, the committee would move forward to request an amendment to the Canada Labour Code. Amending the Canada Labour Code isn't something that can be done quickly; it's not about jotting something down in five minutes. On the contrary, it is a lengthy process. If we want to go in that direction, we would like to do it once and properly, after hearing all the testimony.

Personally, the first thing I propose to do is remove section f of the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll hear from Madame Koutrakis first, and then Monsieur Joseph.

Annie Koutrakis: Mr. Chair, can I kindly request a five-minute suspension? Would that be okay? I'd like to confer with the team and come back in five minutes.

The Chair: We'll suspend for five minutes.

• (1725)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1805)

The Chair: We will resume.

Mr. Genuis.

Garnett Genuis: We've been working on trying to come up with a compromise so that we can move forward. If you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following.

It's that we amend the motion, in section 2, by removing the word “routine” and by removing the line “with a view to assessing the impacts these referrals have on the rights of workers in federal-

ly regulated industries”; that in section (c), we remove everything after the word “groups”; that we remove section (f); that we add an additional section that says, “this study will begin no earlier than November 1st, 2025”; and that after those changes are made, we proceed to an immediate vote on the main motion.

• (1810)

The Chair: I'm going to have the clerk read back what's been proposed as an amendment to the motion, which relates to section 2.

Mr. Clerk, go ahead on the sections that are to be removed.

The Clerk of the Committee (Alexandre Longpré): Section 2 would read:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the impact of the lack of a definition of the term “work” in Part III of the Canada Labour Code and into the government's use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to refer labour disputes to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) for binding arbitration, including their latest intervention ordering Air Canada and their flight attendants into binding arbitration despite the company's refusal to pay these attendants for their pre- and post-flight work, provided that:

- a. the committee dedicate at least four meetings for this study;
- b. the following witnesses be invited to appear on separate panels, for no less than one hour each:
 1. the Minister of Jobs and Families,
 2. the Secretary of States (Labour),
 3. the Chair of the CIRB;
- c. the committee invite labour groups;
- d. the committee receive additional evidence from labour experts, economists, and other witnesses provided to the clerk by members of the committee;
- e. the committee report their findings and recommendations to the House with a request for a government response pursuant to Standing Order 109; and

The new section (f) would be “that this study will begin no earlier than November 1, 2025”.

The Chair: You have heard the amendment to section 2.

Is there unanimity, or do you want to vote on section 2 as now amended?

Garnett Genuis: Chair, there is no vote. I requested unanimous consent for a series of things, so either we agree or we don't.

(Amendment agreed to)

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

The Chair: Madame Koutrakis.

Annie Koutrakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to say thank you very much to my colleagues from the opposition parties for really working hard to find a place where we can all agree and move forward. I know that I speak on behalf of all my colleagues in saying thank you very much. We really appreciate all the good work and the hard work that we did here today.

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing nothing further, and because we are beyond the time, the meeting is adjourned.

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